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Chairman: Mr. Majoor ..... (Netherlands)

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08-57711 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 56: Advancement of women (*continued*)

(a) Advancement of women (*continued*)
(A/C.3/63/L.15/Rev.1)

Draft resolution A/C.3/63/L.15/Rev.1: Supporting efforts to end obstetric fistula

1. **The Chairman** said that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

2. **Ms. Sow** (Senegal) said that more than 500,000 women died in childbirth each year as a result of obstetric fistula, a lesion that affected more than 2 million women in developing countries, marginalizing them in their community and even within their own family. She introduced the draft resolution on behalf of the sponsors, who had been joined by China, Djibouti, Fiji, Georgia, the Maldives, Malta, the Republic of Korea, Serbia, Sierra Leone and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of). Saint Lucia wished to withdraw from the list of sponsors. She thanked the United Nations Population Fund for assisting in the drafting of the document and for organizing the Campaign to End Fistula. She hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus as it had been the previous year.

3. **The Chairman** said that Albania, Algeria, Australia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Denmark, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Montenegro, Netherlands, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Thailand and Timor-Leste also wished to join the list of sponsors.

4. **Mr. McMahan** (United States of America) said he wished to clarify his delegation's position with regard to several provisions of the draft resolution that were not directly related to international efforts against obstetric fistula. The United States of America was committed to those efforts and, over the past five years, its contributions had increased continually, from US$ 1.1 million in 2004 to US$ 16 million in 2008. Referring to the second, eighth and ninth preambular paragraphs and to paragraphs 2 and 4 of the draft resolution, he said that the references to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and their five- and ten-year reviews did not imply or suggest that States intended to create any new rights and, in particular, did not in any way suggest the creation or recognition of the right to abortion. The consensus of the international community concerning the expression "sexual and reproductive health" did not constitute support, endorsement or promotion of abortion or the use of abortifacients.

5. The fourth preambular paragraph did not imply that the States had obligations under human rights instruments to which they were not a party. The recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women should be understood in the context of its mandate and did not oblige States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women to modify policies and laws that were fully consistent with the provisions of the said Convention.

6. He welcomed paragraph 12, which clearly stated that the United Nations Population Fund's global Campaign to End Fistula was only one of numerous possibilities available to Member States that wished to contribute to efforts to end obstetric fistula. The language used in the paragraph did not create or recognize a new internationally agreed Millennium Development Goal target or indicator.

7. **The Reverend Philip J. Bené** (Observer for the Holy See) said that his delegation was in favour of emergency obstetric care, medical delivery services and appropriate pre- and post-natal care, but, in the case of the expressions "sexual and reproductive health", "maternal health services", "comprehensive maternal health care" and "continuum of services", it endorsed the interpretation of the United States delegation.

8. **Ms. Flood-Beaubrun** (Saint Lucia), endorsing the interpretation of several phrases in the draft resolution put forward by the delegations of the United States and the Holy See, said that her country had withdrawn from the list of sponsors.

9. *Draft resolution A/C.3/L.15/Rev.1 was adopted without a vote.*

10. **Mr. Rezvani** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said he welcomed the adoption by consensus of the draft resolution. It was for each State to decide whether it ratified the United Nations conventions, and the Islamic Republic of Iran interpreted the provisions of the draft resolution, particularly those relating to "family planning" and "sexual and reproductive health", according to its domestic laws.

11. **Ms. Sapag** (Chile), noting that 300,000 midwives were needed to fill current gaps, welcomed the

importance attached in the draft resolution to training of medical personnel.

Agenda item 64: Promotion and protection of human rights (*continued*) (A/63/123, A/63/281-S/2008/431, A/63/370-S/2008/614 and A/C.3/63/5)

(b) **Human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms** (*continued*) (A/63/161, A/63/223, A/63/259, A/63/263, A/63/270, A/63/271, A/63/272, A/63/274, A/63/275, A/63/278, A/63/286, A/63/287, A/63/288, A/63/289, A/63/290, A/63/292, A/63/293 and Corr.1, A/63/299, A/63/313, A/63/318, A/63/337, A/63/340, A/63/365, A/63/367 and A/63/486)

(c) **Human rights situations and reports of special rapporteurs and representatives** (*continued*) (A/63/322, A/63/326, A/63/332, A/63/341, A/63/356, A/63/459 and A/C.3/63/4)

(e) **Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** (*continued*) (A/63/264 and Corr.1)

12. **Ms. Walidal-Jassem** (Qatar) said that her country was striving to improve services for persons with disabilities. International organizations, Governments and civil society had a role to play in enhancing the integration of persons with disabilities into society and ensuring the effective recognition of their rights and obligations. It was extremely unfortunate that such persons remained marginalized in some countries. The place accorded in a society to persons with disabilities was indicative of its evolution. Although much work remained to be done, Qatar had made enormous progress with respect to the promotion and protection of the rights of persons with disabilities.

13. At the international level, it had been one of the first Arab countries to ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. It had also signed the Optional Protocol to the Convention and had adopted the Standard Rules on Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities and the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons.

14. At the national level, Qatar had enacted a law enabling persons with disabilities to exercise their rights on an equal footing with other members of society and criminalizing any discrimination against them. It was developing a national strategy on the rights of persons with disabilities and would continue its policy of educational integration launched in 2001 and its capacity-building programmes for workers with disabilities. It would also continue its efforts to ensure that buildings and facilities in the country were adapted to the special needs of persons with disabilities, a subject on which it was organizing two workshops.

15. Qatar was fully committed to implementing the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and called on Member States that had not already done so to consider ratifying the Convention, which was a guide for translating the needs and desires of persons with disabilities into legitimate rights.

16. **Mr. Rezvani** (Islamic Republic of Iran), deploring the unhealthy and confrontational atmosphere that sometimes prevailed within the Committee, wished to contribute in a constructive manner to the examination of the international community's efforts to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms. Human rights governed relationships within society, particularly those between citizens and the State. The United Nations had always been concerned with promoting and protecting the rights of all human beings in all parts of the world; the machinery it had put in place to curb human rights violations, from which no region of the world was free, must therefore be truly universal in scope. That machinery worked on the basis of close international cooperation, yet the issue of human rights was routinely dominated by an all-powerful minority that applied a double standard to members of the international community based on political criteria, which was contrary to the positive spirit and the principles of universality and impartiality that should characterize the examination of the issue.

17. The recent establishment of the Human Rights Council, which was part of the process of ongoing structural reform, should serve to reorient the international debate on human rights. One might nevertheless question the effectiveness of the United Nations human rights protection machinery in general, given the biased, hypocritical and aggressive attitude of some States and the consequent inaction of the institutions responsible for addressing all gross and systematic violations of human rights. Many countries, including some developing ones, had therefore stressed

that structural reform must be accompanied by substantive changes. The universal periodic review mechanism, which was intended to remedy such abuses, marked a breakthrough in the treatment of human rights issues at the intergovernmental level, but there was a strong risk that it, too, would be perverted unless the Human Rights Council took great care to see that measures to ensure the universality and objectivity of the mechanism were put in place and applied.

18. The Islamic Republic of Iran was making unprecedented strides with respect to democracy, prosperity and the rule of law, as would be evident to any impartial observer. That progress had come as a result not of politically motivated external pressure, but of the dynamism of Iranian society and the Government's commitment to the promotion and protection of the rights and fundamental freedoms of its citizens.

19. **Mr. Natalegawa** (Indonesia), highlighting the foundational nature of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which had underpinned his country's efforts to strengthen democracy, said that the sixtieth anniversary of its adoption should be seized as an opportunity for the international community to reaffirm its commitment to the principles enshrined in the Declaration and its resolve to continue working, in an essential spirit of dialogue and cooperation, towards the fulfilment of those principles. As a member of the Human Rights Council, Indonesia was pleased to note the significant progress already made, and it welcomed the frank and productive manner in which the special procedures mandate holders had carried out their work and the innovative and promising nature of the universal periodic review. Indonesia had been one of the first countries to undergo review and was pleased that the outcome had reflected the progress it had achieved with regard to human rights and democracy at the national level, without undue censure of the shortcomings that remained to be addressed. The Human Rights Council was not yet fully operational, but, given its progress to date, it might be time for the Third Committee to consider entrusting the Council with responsibility for reviewing the human rights situation in individual countries and to redirect its own efforts towards the examination of general issues and the formulation of strategic recommendations to the General Assembly.

20. Drawing attention to the diversity that characterized Indonesia and to the decentralization of its system of governance, he stated that a vast network of human rights societies had been put in place across the country with a view to implementing a national action plan. Indonesia was currently working to strengthen local capacities, particularly in the legal sphere, in order to promote a culture of respect for human rights, both in Government institutions and among the general public, as envisaged under the national action plan, and thereby to foster social justice and enhance the welfare of all Indonesians. Moreover, Indonesia had enacted legislation to increase freedom of information and to prevent racial discrimination, withdrawn its reservations to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and taken steps towards ratifying the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment in 2009. It had also played an instrumental role in establishing a human rights body within the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and had continued to collaborate with the United Nations. His delegation reaffirmed its commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights in cooperation with the international community and noted that, in a few weeks Indonesia would be launching the Bali Democracy Forum.

21. **Ms. Radu** (Republic of Moldova) said that her delegation supported the statement made two days earlier by the European Union on agenda items 64 (b) and (c). She welcomed the reports submitted under those items and under item 64 (e), recognizing the utility of the country visits carried out by the Special Rapporteurs and the representatives of the Secretary-General. She drew attention in particular to the findings relating to her country contained in the report of the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (A/63/175). In that connection, she noted that her Government had recently adopted a broad range of measures to reduce the gap between the legal framework and the realities on the ground, a problem which was primarily the result of inadequate financing. The penitentiary administration had undertaken, with the assistance of non-governmental organizations and private donors, to improve detention conditions with respect to food, hygiene and health. Despite persistent prison overpopulation, a situation which needed to be remedied urgently, the number of persons in custody had decreased by a third between 2002 and 2008, thanks mainly to amendments decriminalizing certain offences in the Criminal Code. At the same time,

educational programmes had been put in place to facilitate the reintegration of young offenders into society, which had resulted in a drop in crime, and health care for prisoners had been improved, leading to an appreciable decline in morbidity among the prison population in the period 2001 to 2007. A twinning project, to be launched in cooperation with the international community, would offer the Republic of Moldova new opportunities to make its prison system conform to European Union standards.

22. **Mr. Kim** Chong Hoon (Republic of Korea) said that the year 2008 marked the sixtieth anniversary of the establishment of his Government and of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. That text formed the basis of all the other international human rights instruments, together with the Human Rights Council, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and the various human rights treaty bodies.

23. The United Nations, because of its universal character, had to shoulder the responsibility of human rights protection. The universal periodic review mechanism, in which his country was engaged, tended to draw criticism, but it was effective in that it facilitated enhanced dialogue and cooperation at the national and international levels among the participants in the collective pursuit of human rights.

24. Expressing his country's determination to improve human rights protection, he welcomed the entry into force of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which his country would shortly ratify. Under its National Action Plan, set up in 2007 in accordance with the recommendation of the World Conference on Human Rights, a mechanism was to be established for the systematic protection of human rights. The Republic of Korea had also been successful in improving the understanding of human rights among the public at large, leading to the emergence of a human rights culture in the country.

25. **Ms. Nyamudeza** (Zimbabwe) said her country was fully aware of its obligations under the Charter of the United Nations and the other human rights instruments which it had signed and ratified or to which it had acceded. Zimbabwe subscribed to an all-inclusive definition of human rights that emphasized the indivisibility of civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights. It was disheartening that the universal enjoyment of socio-economic rights through a more humane and equitable international order, an objective proclaimed and reaffirmed in several instruments, was still far from being achieved for millions of people in the world. Instead of using human rights issues to serve their political interests, developed countries should abandon their neoliberal policies and honour their commitments by mobilizing resources to promote the right to life and the right to development.

26. Her Government was striving to empower the country's people economically. It had embarked on a process of equitable distribution of land, which had resulted in its becoming a victim of sanctions and being demonized by the media, in verbiage about so-called human rights violations, at the instigation of the British and their allies. Zimbabwe's democratically constituted multiparty Parliament had adopted laws to safeguard its interests, security and stability, which continued to be under threat, and the so-called human rights defenders were obliged to respect those laws. Similarly, non-governmental organizations should be working for the betterment of the country instead of meddling in its internal affairs. By making an award to non-governmental organizations that had vilified Zimbabwe, Canada had shown that it was bent on destabilizing the country. The ferocity of the campaign against Zimbabwe threatened its independence, its sovereignty and its inalienable right to self-determination.

27. Zimbabwe had always taken the view that if Western countries genuinely wanted to promote and protect the human rights of all peoples, they would adopt a non-confrontational approach. The intergovernmental process espoused by the Human Rights Council was the way forward.

28. **Ms. Filip** (Observer for the Inter-Parliamentary Union) said that human rights were an essential factor in the democratic process now under way in Africa. It was important for individuals and parliamentarians to be familiar with human rights, so as to ensure that they were respected and were incorporated into national legislation. Moreover, human rights were part and parcel of a democratic culture.

29. The Inter-Parliamentary Union had launched a project to involve parliamentarians and all interested parties in the work of the treaty monitoring bodies, and to have them participate in drawing up the reports to be submitted to the treaty bodies. In the long term, they would effectively take ownership of the human rights

question. Seminars had been organized to familiarize parliamentarians with the regional and international human rights treaties, and to encourage them to take stock of their activities in that area, prompting them to recognize the need for specific mechanisms and for a frank approach to the numerous human rights violations in their countries. That initiative, seeking to build a framework of concerted action, had made it possible to create a synergy among parliamentarians, members of national human rights commissions and civil society, and to address human rights issues in a spirit of transparency and dialogue. The seminars had generated great interest and had led to concrete results in a number of countries, including Mali, Mauritania and Togo.

30. **Mr. Dall'oglio** (Observer for the International Organization for Migration) said that migrants had rights which States were bound to respect and protect. Countries of origin, transit and destination must cooperate to ensure that international human rights instruments were implemented and that migrants were aware of their rights and obligations. The Global Migration Group, which brought together 14 United Nations agencies, had issued a publication on migration and human rights.

31. Quoting article 25, paragraph 1, of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, he emphasized that migrants, like everyone else, had a right to an adequate standard of living for themselves and their families. Meeting their health needs also facilitated their social integration and kept down the long-term health costs, thereby contributing to social stability and economic development. He welcomed the adoption by the World Health Assembly of a resolution calling upon Governments to address the health risks of migrants, their families left behind in the countries of origin and their host communities. All those involved in migration should integrate the health dimension into all their work.

32. Migrants were especially vulnerable to ill health because of their legal status and the difficulty they experienced in gaining access to health and social services. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) was working to respond to the health needs of migrants, especially those in an irregular situation, and would continue to cooperate with States to improve respect for migrants' rights and to strengthen the health systems concerned. In some parts of the world, migrants were exposed to a higher risk of HIV, and IOM was calling for joint action to counter that risk effectively. In conjunction with the International Labour Organization (ILO) and Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), it had recently launched a policy brief on HIV and labour migration and was working with partners to design an implementation strategy, building on existing dialogues such as regional consultations.

33. IOM was also cooperating with the International Task Team on HIV-related Travel Restrictions set up by UNAIDS, to prevent HIV sufferers from becoming victims of discrimination. In that context, it was reviewing national legislation and regulations in order to identify 10 non-discriminatory practices which it could recommend, and which would appear in a report to be released shortly.

34. **Ms. Stewart** (International Labour Organization) said the year 2008 marked the entry into force of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, as well as the twenty-fifth anniversary of ILO Convention No. 159 on the vocational rehabilitation and employment of disabled persons. Noting that people with disabilities were overrepresented among poor people, ILO had been working with United Nations agencies to develop instruments to promote employment and skills among those individuals. In Asia and southern Africa, in collaboration with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, it had organized regional meetings on legislation related to disability and the provisions of the Convention, and had pilot-tested a curriculum on disability legislation to be offered at its International Training Centre. ILO was also continuing its collaboration with States, social partners and civil society, including disabled persons' organizations, to improve legislation and policy on the employment and vocational training of people with disabilities, and it was working closely with other United Nations agencies to support the implementation of the Convention.

35. Entrepreneurship was an important avenue towards decent work for persons with disabilities, especially in developing countries. Therefore, building upon the lessons learned from a project to include women with disabilities in mainstream entrepreneurial activities, ILO had prepared guidelines which it had since incorporated into a strategy endorsed by its Governing Body, to be implemented in various developing countries. In conclusion, for the sake of meeting the Millennium Development Goals, and

especially the goal of reducing poverty, she called for greater account to be taken of people with disabilities in all the strategies for poverty reduction and development.

36. **Ms. Rovirosa** (Mexico), speaking on behalf of the Rio Group, said that past and present migrations were the source of the cultural and ethnic richness of the countries in the Group. She regretted the fact that new regulations penalized illegal migrants and asked the Member States to respect human dignity by refraining from subjecting migrants to extended periods of detention and from stigmatizing those who were merely seeking to ensure a better future for their families.

37. Emphasizing that the human individual should be at the heart of the dialogue on migrations and cooperation, the Rio Group welcomed the fact that the question of human rights would be taken into account in the work programme of the second session of the Global Forum on Migration and Development and recalled that respect for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of migrants was the essential condition for attaining the full potential of migrations.

Statements in exercise of the right of reply

38. **Mr. Okuda** (Japan) said that, as part of the process of normalizing diplomatic relations between his country and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Japan had been engaged in discussions with that country on the question of the settlement of the unfortunate past, and intended to continue to do so. The allegations made by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the effect that Japan was refusing to settle the question of its past were baseless. Japan found it difficult to account for those allegations and to understand the intentions behind them. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea should take practical steps to move forward the normalization process. As the Prime Minister of Japan had stated to the General Assembly in September, normalization would take place on the basis of the Pyongyang Declaration through the resolution of the unfortunate past and of the entire range of outstanding issues, including the abduction, nuclear and missile issues. That basic position of Japan remained unchanged. His country hoped that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea would open a fresh inquiry to shed light on abductions. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea could not continue to justify its persistent violations of human rights by making false accusations to the effect that Japan denied its past. His delegation wished to make it clear that the Japanese Government had taken measures to ensure that Korean residents in Japan could lead a normal life and that their fundamental rights were protected and respected. The Japanese Constitution guaranteed equality before the law without any distinction. On the basis of that principle, Japan had focused, during the 60 years since the end of the Second World War, on creating a society free of all forms of discrimination, in particular ethnic and racial discrimination.

39. **Mr. McMahon** (United States of America) said it was regrettable that a representative of his country had been unable to finish reading his statement at the previous meeting on the grounds that the allotted time had elapsed, even though many other representatives who were in the same situation had been able to finish without interruption. Clearly the time limit on speeches imposed by the Chairman should be respected, and all representatives tried to do so. The United States and the majority of the other members of the Committee also respected the right of all members to speak freely and openly, irrespective of their divergent views. That was a fundamental principle of the United Nations and of any democratic assembly. It was regrettable that that principle had been violated by the action of a small minority of Committee members. He noted that the full text of the statement could be consulted on the website of the Permanent Mission of the United States of America to the United Nations. At a time when the members of the Committee were about to take a position on important draft resolutions and to evaluate their merits, it should also be borne in mind that the best means of celebrating the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was not to restrict the debates but rather to ensure that the human rights and fundamental freedoms enshrined in the Declaration were protected and respected, in the first place by the Third Committee.

40. **Ms. Halabi** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the representative of the United States had insisted in his statement on taking an opposing view, thus displaying his ignorance of the legal basis of action by States in the field of human rights. She was surprised that he insisted on remaining aboard a sinking ship instead of following the example of some of his colleagues, such as the former Secretary of State Colin Powell and the former White House spokesman Scott McClellan, who

had abandoned ship at the appropriate time. The proselytizing activities of the United States on behalf of human rights were inappropriate and defied logic. Those activities amounted to interference in the affairs of other States, which was contrary to the rules of international law. The actions of the United States Administration were contradictory to its statements, because its practices were characterized by new forms of human rights violations such as the abduction of the citizens of other countries and putting them on trial outside any juridical framework, contempt for human dignity in the prisons of Guantanamo and Abu Ghraib, the murder of innocent civilians in the course of criminal and terrorist air raids conducted inside the borders of other States Members of the United Nations, targeted assassinations and the very broad latitude granted to so-called "private security companies" in Iraq and elsewhere. The arrogant reading of human rights adopted by the United States was built on an erroneous political foundation and a fragile juridical basis: it assumed the supremacy of the United States notion of human rights over international law and the Charter of the United Nations. Such self-interested conduct was the reason why the United States Administration was now isolated in the world because of the policies it applied. The United States representative ought to have awoken from his political torpor and refrained from delivering sermons at the very time when 185 Member States had voted against the embargo imposed by the United States on Cuba. The statement by the United States representative clearly indicated his ignorance of human rights and of human history.

41. **Mr. Al-Husaini** (Iraq), speaking in response to the statement by the Holy See, said that his country regretted that the Christians of Mosul, who were an integral part of the Iraqi people and had lived in peace with their brethren through the ages, should have been subjected to threats and acts of terrorism by criminal groups which had forced them to take flight. The extremists were seeking to undermine the spirit of tolerance and fraternity which inspired Iraqis and to project a negative image of reality. The Prime Minister had mandated a ministerial commission to hold an enquiry into those acts of terrorism with a view to bringing the persons responsible to justice. The Government had also helped the displaced families by granting them financial assistance. Security measures had been taken to ensure the protection of Christians and their places of worship and to prevent the future occurrence of further acts of terrorism. Security had been restored in the region and many families had already returned home. The Government accorded priority to the security of all minorities, and Iraq would remain a country in which religions coexisted peacefully.

42. **Mr. Pak** Tok Hun (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) said that, at the previous meeting, the representative of Japan had sought to mislead the Committee by stating that the issue of abductions was the main obstacle to the normalization of relations between their two countries. His avoidance of the question of making amends for his country's past misconduct demonstrated Japan's vindictive and deceitful nature. It should be emphasized that the lack of diplomatic relations was actually due primarily to the fact that Japan relentlessly pursued a hostile policy towards his country, refusing to apologize sincerely or to provide restitution for its past crimes. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea could manage perfectly well without having relations with Japan, but the latter had a legal and moral obligation, which it could not evade and of which it must be aware, to make amends for its past. The abductions of just over a dozen Japanese were a drop in the ocean compared with the 8.4 million Koreans abducted by Japan.

43. Under the Pyongyang Declaration, Japan was required to make restitution for its past crimes, while the Democratic People's Republic of Korea was required to resolve the problem of the Japanese who had been abducted. To that end, his country had opened a national inquiry to shed light on the matter and had conveyed the results to Japan. It had thus been able to confirm that 13 Japanese nationals who had disappeared had been abducted around the end of the 1970s and the 1980s. It had expressed its regret and permitted five survivors and their children to return to Japan. It was thus apparent that his country had done all that it could, while Japan had done nothing. The representative of Japan had just stated that his country had taken practical steps to make restitution for its past crimes. That was untrue. Not content with doing nothing, Japan had chosen to respond to his country's generosity by increasing the pressure on it with the imposition of even stricter sanctions. Such ill-considered action suggested that Japan was seeking to distract attention from its own shortcomings. Japan should know that the imposition of sanctions and other

forms of pressure would only hasten its own destruction.

44. With regard to the statement by the representative of the United States, he said that there were no human rights problems, as such, in his country. The allegations by the United States representative were false and, indeed, constituted interference in the internal affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the sole purpose being to overthrow the Government, thus fulfilling the United States ardent wish to dominate the whole of Korea, which was located in an area of great strategic importance. That was why it had attempted to internationalize the human rights situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea through General Assembly resolution 62/167 on the human rights situation in that country. Contrary to the assertions of its representative, it was in the United States rather than in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that human rights problems might be found. There was no point dwelling on the appalling situation, since it spoke for itself.

45. **Mr. Stavrou** (Cyprus) deplored the fact that the representative of Turkey had yet again chosen to respond to the statement on Cyprus with distortions and false accusations in an attempt to distract attention from the real problem, for which Turkey was entirely responsible. The reason for the continued partition of Cyprus, with clearly traumatic effects for both the Turkish and the Greek Cypriot communities, was that the Turkish army continued to occupy a large area of an independent sovereign State, a member of both the United Nations and the European Union, and supported an illegal secessionist entity, which had been condemned in numerous Security Council resolutions.

46. All that needed to be said could be found in Cyprus's statement at the previous meeting, the various Security Council resolutions and the judgements of the European Court of Human Rights. It was up to Cypriots themselves to find a solution to their problem. Such a solution would consist of putting an end to the occupation, reunifying Cyprus and its two communities and establishing and protecting the fundamental rights and freedoms of all Cypriots, in accordance with Security Council resolutions, high-level agreements, decisions of the European Court of Human Rights and the founding values and principles of the European Union. Full compliance with the laws governing the individual freedoms of all Cypriots, regardless of religion or ethnic origin, must be an integral part of any solution that aimed to be fair, comprehensive, practical and viable. If Turkey really wished to resolve the problem of Cyprus, it had only to withdraw its occupation troops and leave Turkish and Greek Cypriots to live together in peace and harmony.

47. **Mr. García Collada** (Cuba) said he regretted that the United States representative had decided to leave the room without hearing the reply to his vacuous and baseless statement of the previous day, which, irrational and full of hatred as it was, illustrated the arrogance of a global Power. Cuba totally rejected the statement made by the United States. The Cuban people did not recognize that country's authority to pass moral judgement on any other people whatsoever, let alone Cuba. His delegation wondered what gave the United States the right to launch wars of conquest, bomb defenceless civilians in the name of peace and torture them in the name of democracy. The United States had no right at all to judge the Cuban people, who stood as a symbol of liberty to all humankind. It had become an obsession with the United States to put an end to the freedom enjoyed by all Cubans and to destroy the society that they had created. The United States was in no position to lecture Cuba on human rights, given that it tortured persons detained at Guantanamo and elsewhere and subjected them to the most brutal treatment. The Cuban revolution had resisted 50 years of violent aggression, embargos and hostility on the part of the super-Power, and it was still developing, in the process making Cuban society juster and more humane, by focusing its aspirations on the individual. The United States sought to destroy those aspirations with its embargo — a genocidal policy that had been rejected by 185 Member States when they adopted a draft resolution calling for the blockade to be lifted.

48. The electoral fraud that had carried President Bush to power in 2000 was not possible in Cuba. In Cuba, there were no big multinational enterprises to pollute and exploit the environment, or landed estates, or children deprived of education. Cubans enjoyed top-quality health-care services and were not obliged to demean themselves in order to find work. The United States empire recruited mercenaries to carry out its policies of annexation to make life even more difficult for the heroic Cuban people. Cuba aspired to the creation of a democracy that would be a source of progress in every respect. The United States, which waged war only to enrich its military-industrial

complex, had nothing to teach the Cuban people, since it was incapable of providing hospital care to millions of its people or of saving the lives of thousands of Americans, who were left to fend for themselves, exposed to the fury of the elements. Cuba had always resisted. It would not budge.

49. **Mr. Chernenko** (Russian Federation) said that the moralizing tone adopted by the representative of the United States, who had made politicized and baseless comments on the human rights situation in the Russian Federation, was unacceptable. It was ironic that a country that had voted against the establishment of the Human Rights Council and did its best to sabotage it and boycott its activities should call on other States to respect human rights.

50. The United States was guilty of innumerable human rights violations. At the same time, 96 per cent of the non-governmental organizations registered in his country were American in origin and it was perfectly normal that the host country should decide to suspend their activities when they failed to observe Russian law. As for freedom of the press, he recalled the case of the *New York Times* journalist who, after refusing to reveal a source of information that she had quoted concerning phone tapping by the United States Administration, had been given a heavy fine by a Washington court. Moreover, according to various sources, including the non-governmental organization Reporters Without Borders, the United States military in Iraq and Afghanistan had, since 2004, illegally held about a dozen journalists whose guilt had not been established.

51. Lastly, he called on all delegations to observe the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, including the provisions relating to the length of speeches, and to respect State sovereignty.

52. **Mr. Okuda** (Japan) said that he had two comments to make concerning the statement by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. First, Japan had no intention of avoiding the question of the past. It intended to normalize relations with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on the basis of the Pyongyang Declaration. It would settle the question of the regrettable events of the past and would seek a comprehensive solution to outstanding questions, including those relating to abductions, nuclear power and missiles. Secondly, his delegation did not claim that the abductions were the only issue but simply that they were of particular significance, given that they related to the life and security of foreign nationals. It could be said that abductions that took the form of enforced disappearances constituted a violation of the fundamental rights of the nationals of other sovereign States. General Assembly resolution 62/167 on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, in confirming that view, called upon the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to resolve the question through existing channels and to ensure the immediate return of abductees.

53. **Mr. Pak** Tok Hun (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) said that he did not propose to dwell on the questionable comments by the representative of Japan. He would simply ask him about the sad fate of 8.4 million Koreans and the 200,000 "comfort women" who had been victims of the Imperial Japanese Army. The more Japan sought to use the abduction question to distort the facts, the further it sank into ignominy. He reminded Japan that in order to make amends for its criminal past it had to win the world's confidence, become a member of the international community and make peace with its conscience. It was in Japan's best interests to change its mindset and understand the advantages offered by a policy decision to atone for its past conduct.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.